DARK AVENGERS

SIEGE

BENDIS • DEODATO • BEREDO

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DARK AVENGERS

WARNING! READ SIEGE #4 BEFORE YOU READ THIS ISSUE!

NORMAN OSBORN, FORMER THUNDERBOLTS LEADER, HAS RISEN TO POWER AND WAS APPOINTED TO REPLACE TONY STARK AS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TASK FORCE, H.A.M.M.E.R., WHICH INCLUDES HIS OWN TEAM OF AVENGERS.

THEY'RE A GATHERING OF CONTROVERSIAL FIGURES THAT NORMAN HAS GIVEN THE ICONIC LIKENESSES OF MANY OF THE FAMOUS AVENGERS, AS WELL AS THE SECRET IDENTITIES THAT GO WITH THEM. JOINING FORMER MIGHTY AVENGERS ARES AND SENTRY ARE THE ASSASSIN BULLSEYE, NOW HAWKEYE; REFORMED CRIMINAL MOONSTONE, NOW MS. MARVEL; WOLVERINE'S DISTURBED SON DAKEN, NOW WOLVERINE; VENOM HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A NEW SPIDER-MAN, AND NORMAN UNVEILED HIS NEW IDENTITY...THE IRON PATRIOT.

THE MIGHTY THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, HAS RECENTLY RETURNED TO EARTH AND BROUGHT THE GOLDEN CITY OF ASGARD AND ALL THE GODS WHO CALL IT HOME WITH HIM. ASGARD FLOATS JUST FEET ABOVE THE FIELDS OF BROXTON, OKLAHOMA.

WITH THE COAXING OF THOR'S BROTHER LOKI, NORMAN AIMS HIS SIGHTS ON ASGARD. AFTER MANUFACTURING AN INCIDENT THAT GAVE HIM AN EXCUSE TO INVADE, NORMAN DOES, IN FULL FORCE, BACKED BY HIS DARK AVENGERS, THE CORRUPTED CRIMINAL INITIATIVE TEAMS AND CONVENTIONAL H.A.M.M.E.R. FORCES --AND IN FRONT OF THE INVITED WORLD MEDIA.

UNITED AGAINST A COMMON THREAT, THE HEROES GATHERED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NEWLY RESURRECTED CAPTAIN AMERICA, STEVE ROGERS, AND ULTIMATELY LIFTED OSBORN'S SIEGE. WITH THE AVENGERS TRIUMPHANT, ROGERS IS NOW IN CHARGE OF THE UNITED STATES' WELL-BEING.

BUT ALL THIS WAS NOT WITHOUT COST. THE GREAT CITY OF ASGARD HAS FALLEN.

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS – WRITER
MIKE DEODATO – ART
RAIN BEREDO – COLOR ART
VC'S CORY PETIT – LETTERER
DEODATO AND BEREDO – COVER ART
LAUREN SANKOVITCH – ASSOCIATE EDITOR
TOM BREVOORT – EDITOR
JOE QUESADA – EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY – PUBLISHER
ALAN FINE – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

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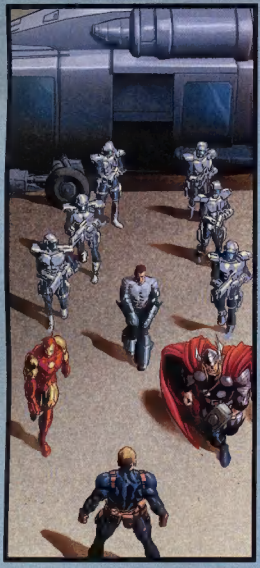


GENTLEMEN. OSBORN. MY NAME IS CAPTAIN STEVE ROGERS.
THE PRESIDENT HAS ASKED ME TO *PERSONALLY* SEE TO YOUR INCARCERATION.
SUB-BASEMENT LEVEL SEVEN WILL BE YOUR NEW HOME.
YOU WILL BE THE *ONLY* PRISONER ON THAT FLOOR.
ANY QUESTIONS? NO?
GOOD.

YESTERDAY.
THE SIEGE OF ASGARD.
HANDS OVER YOUR HEADS.
YOU PUNKS ARE OFFICIALLY WAR CRIMINALS. MAKE A MOVE AND I'LL SHOOT YA ON SIGHT.
WE'LL SEE, FURY.
TOOTS...
YOU BET YOU WILL.
I SERVED MY COUNTRY, SAME AS ALL OF YOU.
YA KNOW, SOMETIMES IT'S NICE TO KNOW IT'S TIME TO SHUT THE ##$$% UP.
OH, HEY...
I WANT YOU PEOPLE TO PROMISE ME HE PAYS FOR HIS CRIMES.
IN AN AMERICAN COURT.
HE PAYS. HE GOES TO JAIL FOR THIS.

SON OF A--!!
THIS IS DANVERS! MOONSTONE'S MAKING A GETAWAY!
I AM IN PURSUIT.
HA!
IT'S BULLSEYE! HE'S BOLTING!
OH, GOOD. IT'S YOU.
I GOT IT.
FFIIIZZZZZZ
HEH.
FSHHHM
BOOM

SMACK
SMACK

OH BOY.
SHARUMP
YOU DROPPED SOMETHING.
THANKS, LUKE.
ANYBODY ELSE GOT ANY SHENANIGANS THEY WANT TO TRY?
MY NAME IS VICTORIA HAND.
I WOULD LIKE A LAWYER, PLEASE.
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, COMMANDER HAND.

BROXTON, MAIN STREET.
DARK WOLVERINE.
LISTEN AND LISTEN GOOD...
BY THE ORDER OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, BROXTON, OKLAHOMA IS NOW UNDER A TEMPORARY ORDER OF MARTIAL LAW.
THAT MEANS, U.S. ARMY PERSONNEL, AND U.S. ARMY PERSONNEL ONLY ARE IN CHARGE.
CURFEW FOR CITIZENS OF THIS ENTIRE CITY IS IN IMMEDIATE EFFECT.
AGENTS OF H.A.M.M.E.R., YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.
DROP YOUR WEAPONS AND SURRENDER TO THE NEAREST U.S. ARMED FORCES REPRESENTATIVE.
YOUR WEAPONS ARE CONFISCATED AND YOUR TITLE IS DECOMMISSIONED EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.
YOU HAVE NO JURISDICTION HERE.
DO COOPERATE.
YOU ARE ALL NOW FUGITIVES FROM FEDERAL JUSTICE AND WE HAVE ORDERS TO SHOOT ON SIGHT.
SURRENDER NOW, OR YOUR RIGHTS WILL BE FORFEITED.
WE WILL BE SEARCHING ALL HOMES AND BUSINESSES.
SURRENDER NOW. YOUR COOPERATION WILL BE NOTED.
HORODOWSKY, CHECK THE BARBER SHOP. MARCOS, CHECK THE BAR.
YES SIR.
ANYONE IN HERE? THIS IS THE UNITED STATES ARMY...
U.S. ARMY!
CHUCK

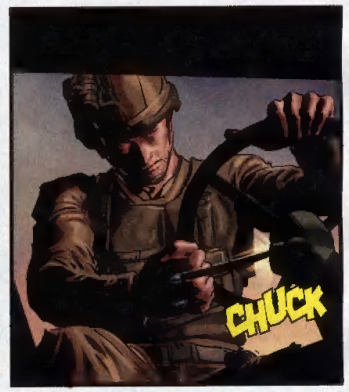
CLEAR.
WHY CAN'T WE JUST GO BACK TO OUR HOMES??
IT'S JUST FOR THE TIME BEING, SIR.
MY DOG...
WE'LL HELP YOU FIND YOUR DOG.

HEY, GUYS... YOU HEARD THE SARGE.
EVERYONE IN FRONT OF THE MOVIE THEATRE. ASAP.
GUY CALLED IT, LIKE, TEN MINUTES AGO.
WHEN WAS THIS?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HELL IF I KNOW.
GET YOUR GEAR AND GET MOVING.

WHERE'S THE MOVIE THEATRE?
THIS ENTIRE TOWN IS TWO BLOCKS LONG. SHOULDN'T BE HARD TO FIND.
HEY, WHO WAS THAT GUY?
HELL IF I KNOW.

PING

VRAROOM


CHUCK

KABOOM

AVENGERS TOWER.
WHAT ARE WE DOIN' HERE, FURY?
GUY WANTED TO TALK TO YA.
PHOBOS, SON OF ARES.
I AM THOR.
YOUR FATHER, ARES, SON OF ZEUS, DIED IN BATTLE THE WAY HE MOST LIKELY WOULD HAVE WANTED TO.
AND AS IS OUR WAY, HE BEQUEATHED YOU ALL THAT WAS HIS.
HE WAS A MIGHTY WARRIOR, WITH THE HEART OF A LION.

WHEN YOU GROW OLDER...
HOPEFULLY YOU WILL GROW TO KNOW, YOUR FATHER MOVED MOUNTAINS TO TRY AND GIVE TO YOU THAT WHICH HE NEVER HAD.
AND HE DIED TRYING TO PROTECT IT.
HE WAS A SON OF A BITCH.
DO YOU WANT ME TO TAKE YOU TO NEW OLYMPUS TO MEET WITH YOUR KIN?
UH, NO.
AS YOUR FATHER WOULD HAVE WANTED IT.
BUT THAT [redacted] YOURS TO DECIDE, YOUNG PRINCE.
BUT KNOW THAT IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, I WILL GRANT YOU YOUR WISH.
I TOO LOST MY FATHER RECENTLY AND I TOO WAS FILLED WITH RAGE AND SADNESS,
BUT I HAVE SINCE DECIDED TO LIVE MY LIFE THE WAY HE HAD LIVED HIS.
TO HONOR HIS LIFE BY LIVING MINE IN TURN.
I OFFER YOU THAT SAME WISDOM.
AND THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU FIGHTING THIS FIGHT. THAT'S WHY I WOULDN'T LET YOU GO.
I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM.
NAH, KID. IT WOULDN'T HAVE GONE DOWN ANY DIFFERENT.
AND IT HAPPENED BEFORE WE [redacted] GOT THERE.
DON'T WORRY.
EVERYONE IS GETTING WHAT IS COMING TO THEM.

MISS HAND, DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
YES, CAPTAIN AMERICA, I DO.
CALL [redacted] CAPTAIN ROGERS.
HAVE WE MET BEFORE? IN PERSON?
NO, SIR.
I WAS ONLY [redacted] S.H.I.E.L.D. ACCOUNTANT WHEN YOU [redacted] LAST...ALIVE.
I KNOW.
I'M NOW WELL-VERSED IN THE WORLD ACCORDING TO VICTORIA HAND.
I WAS JUST WONDERING IF WE'D MET [redacted] PASSING OR...
NO, SIR.
WELL, I CAME HERE TO SPEAK TO YOU, IN PERSON, BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT NORMAN OSBORN IS.
I KNOW WHAT ALMOST ALL OF THOSE AVENGERS HE PICKED OUT ARE.
I *KNOW* THAT. I *UNDERSTAND* THAT. AS TAINTED AND TWISTED AS IT ALL WAS, I DO UNDERSTAND IT.
BUT WHEN I LAY ALL THE PIECES OF THIS ON THE TABLE, *YOU* WERE THE PIECE I [redacted] HAVING TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING.
WHAT WAS SOMEONE LIKE YOU EVEN *DOING* HERE?

I WAS CALLED TO SERVE.
[illegible] FOR A MAN LIKE THAT.
I WILL-- OKAY, I WILL BE THE FACE OF IT FOR YOU.
AS HARD [illegible] THIS MAY BE FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU TO UNDERSTAND...I, [illegible] MILLIONS OF AMERICANS, WERE VERY TAKEN [illegible] BY A VERY CHARISMATIC [illegible] WITH THE PROMISE OF AN AGENDA I COMPLETELY AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREED WITH.
AND I WAS VERY EXCITED TO TRY TO [illegible] THE WORLD BETTER AND SAFER THAN IT HAS BEEN FOR A VERY LONG TIME.
EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT HE'S INSANE. AND THE SENTRY...
YES, YES. BUT YOU SAID YOU READ MY REPORTS.
I WAS TRYING TO GET HIM HELP. I WAS TRYING TO FIX THE PROBLEM [illegible] WITHIN.
BUT HE WAS A RUNAWAY FREIGHT TRAIN COMING RIGHT AT MY FACE AND I FAILED.
I FAILED HIM AND I FAILED THE COUNTRY.
HMM.

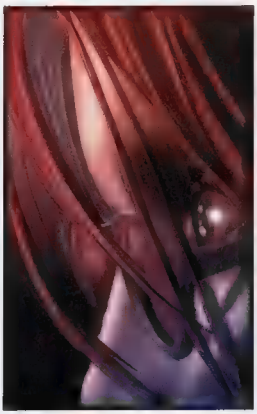
WELL, AS I SAID, I READ ALL ABOUT YOU.
AND I MUST SAY I FEVERISHLY DISAGREE WITH ALMOST EVERY THOUGHT YOU HAVE ROLLING AROUND IN THAT HEAD OF YOURS.

YES SIR.

BUT YOU ARE A PATRIOT. AND AN EXCEPTIONAL SOLDIER.
AND YOU HAVE DONE NOTHING BUT SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.
I'LL EXPECT THE SAME FROM YOU.

SIR?

TAKE A LONG WEEKEND.
SHOWER. GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF.
OH, AND CALL YOUR PARENTS. THEY ARE VERY UPSET.
AND I'LL SEE YOU FOR YOUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT BRIGHT AND EARLY MONDAY MORNING.



WHAT?

WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT, NORMAN.
WHEN YOU SCREW THE POOCH, YOU *REALLY* SCREW THE POOCH.
YOU CAN MAKE FUN OF ME ALL YOU WANT...
BUT YOU *KNOW* THIS IS TRUE...

I WAS RIGHT.
THE WORLD *IS* A MESS AND THE WORLD NEEDED ME TO *FIX* IT. AND I *WOULD* HAVE. I COULD HAVE.
THIS WORLD IS A MADHOUSE OF MUTANTS, TERRORISTS, PSYCHOTICS, ALIENS AND MONSTERS.
ALL OF THEM CLASHING AND CRASHING INTO EACH OTHER AT EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY.
PEOPLE PUT ON COSTUMES AND JUST DECIDE, ALL BY THEMSELVES, THAT THEY ARE THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.
THAT IT'S *OKAY* FOR THEM TO GO AND DO WHATEVER THE HELL THEY WANT TO WHOEVER THEY WANT BECAUSE THEY HAVE A *COSTUME.*
WELL, I AM TELLING YOU, THE WORLD IS GOING TO END, ONE DAY SOON, IT'S GOING TO ACTUALLY EXPLODE.
THE WRONG CREATURE IS GOING TO SLAM INTO THE WRONG MUTANT AND BOOM.
THAT WILL BE IT.
ALL OF THIS-- ALL OF IT WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING.
ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS *STOP IT.*
ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS FIX THE PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY HAPPENED.
I *KNOW* THE MUTANTS OF THIS WORLD WILL RISE UP AND KILL US.
I *KNOW* THAT THE HULK WILL [redacted] DAY DECIDE TO DESTROY EVERYTHING HE SEES.
I *KNOW* THE PUNISHER WILL ONE DAY KILL THE WRONG PERSON AND SET OFF A CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT WILL LEAD TO *NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST.*
I *KNOW* THAT THESE HEROES WILL DIVE HEAD FIRST INTO SOMETHING THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND AND END UP DOING SUCH INSANE DAMAGE TO THE WORLD THAT HUMANS CAN NO LONGER *LIVE* ON IT.
VICTOR VON DOOM WILL CRUSH US UNDER FOOT IN HIS LAST MAD GASP OF AIR.
I KNOW THIS IS TRUE.
I *KNOW* IT.
AND I COULD HAVE STOPPED IT.
IF NOT FOR THE FACT THAT YOU KEPT STANDING IN MY @#$@# WAY...

AW, BOO HOO.
LEAVE ME ALONE.
CAN'T! I'M STUCK HERE.

SIEGE
CHECKLIST

DECEMBER
- ☑ SIEGE: THE CABAL
- ☑ AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE #31
- ☑ ORIGINS OF SIEGE

JANUARY
- ☑ SIEGE #1
- ☑ AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE #32
- ☑ DARK AVENGERS #13
- ☑ DARK WOLVERINE #82
- ☑ NEW AVENGERS #61
- ☑ SIEGE: EMBEDDED #1
- ☑ SIEGE: STORMING ASGARD - HEROES & VILLAINS

FEBRUARY
- ☑ SIEGE #2
- ☑ AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE #33
- ☑ DARK AVENGERS #14
- ☑ DARK WOLVERINE #83
- ☑ NEW AVENGERS #62
- ☑ SIEGE: EMBEDDED #2
- ☑ THOR #607
- ☑ THUNDERBOLTS #141

MARCH
- ☑ SIEGE #3
- ☑ AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE #34
- ☑ DARK AVENGERS #15
- ☑ DARK WOLVERINE #84
- ☑ MIGHTY AVENGERS #35
- ☑ NEW AVENGERS #63
- ☑ NEW MUTANTS #11
- ☑ SIEGE: EMBEDDED #3
- ☑ THOR #608
- ☑ THUNDERBOLTS #142

APRIL
- ☑ MIGHTY AVENGERS #36
- ☑ NEW AVENGERS #64
- ☑ DARK AVENGERS #16
- ☑ SIEGE: CAPTAIN AMERICA
- ☑ SIEGE: LOKI
- ☑ SIEGE: SECRET WARRIORS
- ☑ SIEGE: SPIDER-MAN
- ☑ SIEGE: YOUNG AVENGERS
- ☑ THOR #609
- ☑ THUNDERBOLTS #143

MAY
- ☐ SIEGE #4
- ☐ AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE #35
- ☐ DARK AVENGERS #16
- ☐ FALLEN (not final title)
- ☐ SIEGE: EMBEDDED #4

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS
OLIVIER COIPEL

HAHAHA
HAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHA
HAHA
THE END.

Normy go bye bye!?

Boy!! Well, I'll be totally honest with you. I put this one off. I was waiting to the last possible minute to write this little farewell page to Dark Avengers. Because I didn't want to write it!!

Once you put the final 'thanks for everything' page to bed it means the book is officially dunzo. And I didn't want the damn book to be officially over. Me sad.

I loved writing this book! I did! I know writers always say that like they are legally obligated to but they are always lying. I'm not. I really had a good time writing it. It was the artistic challenge I was hoping for, I was surrounded by an always-awesome creative team of awesome people, and it ended up being one of the biggest hits of any of our careers.

Oh, and it should not have been a hit, by the way. You always hope for a hit but this is a book staring Jew fro-wearing Norman Osborn!! And, to our shock and delight, almost the entire time this book was in production it was Marvel's number one ongoing title. Starring Norman Osborn? That means one day somewhere someone will turn to someone and say: You know, Johnny, Norman Osborn was actually the star of the number one book at Marvel Comics?"

Now I don't know who this Johnny is, but I bet he'll be in slack-jawed disbelief.

Thank you guys for buying this book, for enjoying the book, and for arguing online about it until you were blue in the face. Thank you for loudly supporting this book in a way that probably said more about you as a person than you were consciously willing to admit.

There are a lot of people who helped make this stapled bit of awesome but I really want to thank Mike Deodato Jr. Mike and I worked together briefly on New Avengers and though that went pretty well it didn't match my personal expectations because I was such a huge fan of his. But very quickly into our run on this book that feeling went away and was replaced by, well, I'm not sure what the medical term for it is...but one of the symptoms is sitting alone in front of your computer and pumping your fist in the air and yelling: HOME RUN!!

Mike is gravitas!! That's what he is! Gravitas!

I am proud and honored that we were able to do this book together and I know I will look back on this fondly. But the one person I really thank, whose name you won't see in the credits...the person I want to dedicate this entire book to is Warren Ellis. I have said on record numerous times that more often than not Warren is my favorite comic book writer. And not only did he show me, and all of us, how cool it would be to put Norman in charge of something big and cool...he also showed me the best way to write for Mike. For both of these things I publicly thank you. I hope that you take some pride in this book.

Now I know some of you, like me, wish this book would still continue even though there is clearly no way in hell that could possibly happen. But think of it this way...instead of this book you're getting two new books to read. Now Mike and I will be splitting up (Me sad.) but I will be concocting the Avengers (!) with the mighty John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson, which is another dream come true for me. And my darling Mike will be heading over to join my friend Ed Brubaker on a brand-new book called the Secret Avengers. I have seen some pages of Secret Avengers and it's an amazing continuation of the work he is doing here.

I want to thank every single person that makes this book including our amazing editors Tom and Lauren. Go check the credits of the book. Take a moment and bask in their awesome. Except for that Dan Buckley person. I've never met him. I'm not sure what he does.

Now, though, I am legally obligated to say: I promise you ain't seen nothing yet. I really do mean it. Both New Avengers and Avengers are on their way and I think they are both top-notch, super, quality, awesome, super hero books on every single level. So out of the death of this awesome welcome three new awesome Avengers books.

But I feel I can't leave you without giving you a secret I promised you the first day this book hit the stands. The big question...what is Norman Osborn's hair actually made of?

The answer? Two words. Tootsie Roll.

Thank you & goodnight.

BENDIS!
Portland, Oregon
April 2010